



Application No. 09/374,577
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Examiner Choules, Jack M.
TC/A.U. 2177

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-47. (Canceled)

48. (Currently Amended) A vehicle description language (VDL) hierarchical data structure that is stored in a memory system of one or more communicatively coupled computing systems interconnected through an intermediary subsystem and transmitted via communications medium between the communicatively coupled computing systems to communicate information associated with a vehicle in support of application(s) executing thereon, the data structure comprising:

(a) a public block of data, having starting and ending delimiters that identify the beginning and end of the block of data, wherein the public block of data comprises:

(i) a vehicle identification sub-block hierarchically nested in the public block of data and comprising a plurality of data items wherein the data items are selected from the group consisting of manufacturer, model, model year and style of the vehicle,

(ii) a vehicle detail sub-block hierarchically nested in the public block of data, wherein the vehicle detail sub-block comprises:

- (1) a standard feature sub-block hierarchically nested in the vehicle detail sub-block and comprising a plurality of standard feature categories, wherein each standard feature category is hierarchically nested in the standard feature sub-block and comprises a plurality of data items relating to standard equipment available on a vehicle, and
- (2) an optional feature sub-block hierarchically nested in the vehicle detail sub-block and comprising a plurality of option categories, wherein each option category is hierarchically nested in the option sub-block and comprises a plurality of data items relating to a particular category of optional equipment desired on a particular vehicle; and
- (b) a private block of data comprising a plurality of data items relating to the customer who is ordering the vehicle including at least a ranking of product attributes;
wherein one of the computing systems receives the data structure and operates on at least the vehicle detail sub-block to select a subset of a [[the]] target group of sellers by comparing at least features of the vehicle in [[the]] a request for quote (RFQ) with products of at least one seller from the target group of sellers.

49. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein each sub-block contains a starting delimiter and an ending delimiter, wherein the starting delimiter identifies the block or sub-block within which the sub-block is nested.

50. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein each category consists essentially of a starting delimiter and an ending delimiter identifying the sub-block within which the category is nested.

51. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein each data item consists essentially of a starting delimiter and an ending delimiters identifying the block, sub-block or category within which the data item is nested.

52. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein the standard categories are selected from the group consisting of comprise exterior, interior, mechanical, safety, fuel mileage, rating, and combinations thereof.

53. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein the option categories are selected from the group consisting of emissions, engine, transmission, preferred equipment groups, appearance package, tires, seat type, seat trim, paint additional options, and combinations thereof.

54. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein the public block further comprises a color sub-block nested within the public block, wherein

the color sub-block having nested therein categories comprises color selections and color combinations.

55. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein the data items in the private block comprise the customer's name, address and phone number.

56. (Previously Presented) The vehicle description language of claim 48 wherein the language is implemented with Extensible Markup Language (XML).

57. (Original) The vehicle description language of claim 48, wherein the vehicle description language is employed in communications between at least two communicatively coupled computing systems.

58-68. (Canceled)

69. (Currently Amended) A storage medium comprising content which, when executed, causes a computing system to process a vehicle descriptor language (VDL) datagram including information to describe an automobile for transmission stored in a memory, the VDL datagram comprising:

(a) a public block of data, having starting and ending delimiters that identify the beginning and end of the block of data, wherein the public block of data comprises:

(i) a vehicle identification sub-block hierarchically nested in the public block of data and comprising a plurality of data items wherein the

data items are selected from the group consisting of manufacturer, mode,

model year and style of the vehicle,

(ii) a vehicle detail sub-block hierarchically nested in the public block of data, wherein the vehicle detail sub-block comprises:

(1) a standard feature sub-block hierarchically nested in the vehicle detail sub-block and comprising a plurality of standard feature categories, wherein each standard feature category is hierarchically nested in the standard feature sub-block and comprises a plurality of data items relating to standard equipment available on a vehicle, and

(2) an optional feature sub-block hierarchically nested in the vehicle detail sub-block and comprising a plurality of option categories, wherein each option category is hierarchically nested in the option sub-block and comprises a plurality of data items relating to a particular category of optional equipment desired on a particular vehicle; and

(b) a private block of data comprising a plurality of data items relating to the customer who is ordering the vehicle including at least a ranking of product attributes;

wherein computing system operates on at least the vehicle detail sub-block to select a subset of [[the]] a target group of sellers by comparing at least features of the

vehicle in [[the]] a request for quote(RFQ) with products of at least one seller from the target group of sellers.

70. (Original) A storage medium according to claim 69, wherein the communicatively coupled memory is located within a remote computing appliance, coupled to the computing system through transmission means.

71-73. (Canceled)